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ABSTRACT

The Discovery Learning, Inc. (DLI) process of instruction is an instructional delivery system that combines presentations of ideas, subject matter, and classroom management in a dynamic setting. The first component of the model is a blending of directed dialogue instruction, participation-generating techniques, and innovative presentations of standard topics. The second component is the mechanism for teaching the system to teachers and strengthening their content knowledge base. It is shared through an intensive teaching workshop, an appropriate content course, follow-up visits, meetings, and peer and self evaluation. The third component consists of five parts: (1) introduction (from below and above); (2) acceptance (from demonstrations and discussions as well as self-identified local needs assessments); (3) use (theory, practice and follow-up); (4) broadcasting (teacher-training-teachers and school district full adoption); and (5) evaluation by school district. Proper documentation and evaluation as the model develops and changes are critical components. All major activities are videotaped. Quality tapes are created and used to introduce and explain the model to those interested in adopting and implementing it. (JD)

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The DLI Inservice Model
for
Instruction
in
Basic Skills & Other Subjects

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Overview of the Model

The model has three distinct components.

The **FIRST** component, a teaching delivery and management system, is the heart of the model. The system is called the DLI Process of Instruction, a blending of directed dialogue instruction, participation-generating techniques and innovative presentations of standard topics.

The **SECOND** component is the mechanism for teaching the system to teachers and for strengthening their content knowledge base. It is shared through an intensive teaching workshop, an appropriate content course, follow-up visits, meetings, and peer and self evaluation.

The **THIRD** component is the protocol for insuring the successful transfer of the DLI Process of Instruction. It consists of five parts:

1. Introduction (from below and from above);
2. Acceptance (from demonstrations and discussions as well as self-identified local needs assessments);
3. Use (theory, practice and follow-up);
4. Broadcasting ('teacher-training-teachers' and school district full adoptions); and
5. Evaluation (by the school district).

Proper documentation and evaluation as the model develops and changes are critical components.

All major activities are videotaped. Quality tapes are created and used to introduce and explain the model to those interested in adopting and implementing it.

Description of the Model

THE SYSTEM

The DLI Process of Instruction is an instructional delivery system which combines presentations of ideas, subject matter, and classroom management in a dynamic setting. It is a process of learning for students and for teachers. The DLI Process is based in the notions that (1) almost all students have the logical reasoning ability to understand concepts and theories, and that (2) a joy of learning can be instilled in almost all students.

Because students learn best when they are actively involved, classes are conducted through the use of a question-answer dialogue. Guided by a well-prepared teacher, students are led to an understanding of ideas and procedures by their own discovery. Student participation is monitored and controlled by the use of non-verbal responses. This establishes an atmosphere in which all students can actively participate and can be recognized for each answer.

A non-threatening classroom atmosphere generated by non-verbal responses is further guaranteed by voluntary participation. This allows a student to listen and not fear the embarrassment of being put on the spot.

The subject matter which can be used with the DLI Process of Instruction varies greatly. Almost all mathematics topics in arithmetic, algebra, and geometry are amenable to use with the DLI Process. Basic language concepts of grammar and reading are also readily adaptable. Yet how ideas are presented to and received by students is often more important than what one is trying to teach. This is especially true in classes of underachievers. The generation of patterns of mathematical laws and relationships or of rules and structures of grammar can be exciting learning adventures when the teacher carefully escalates the level of commitment required by the students to solve each step of the discovery.

A host of innovative, dynamic, classroom management techniques further insures the success of this type of instruction. Waiting for a minimal number of volunteers before taking an answer, involving many students in each answer, not accepting called-out answers, having students agree or disagree with each other's answers, and taking all answers before resolving the question are some of the techniques which have proved to be highly effective.

THE MECHANISM

The mechanism for teacher training and community participation has several distinct elements.

WORKSHOP

A 2-week 'teachers-training-teachers' workshop is conducted for participants to learn and practice the essentials of the DLI Process of Instruction. Peer training includes script preparation and demonstrations of model teaching with classes of children.

COURSE

A 2-week class is held for trainees to review and learn about important content topics, to discuss barriers to learning, to develop ideas to resolve these barriers, to plan how to integrate basic skills into other subjects, and to conduct research studies. Classes are led by district implementers, invited college faculty and corporate scientists.

VISITS

Follow-up observations and critiques by district staff and peer teachers are conducted at participants' schools throughout the school year. Broader community support is maintained by visits from administrators, parents, school board members, local industry and the media.

MEETINGS

School and community inservice programs are held to explain the program and its effect on teaching. They are conducted by current participants and school administrators.

Requested, relevant and important content topics are presented and discussed during three 2-day seminars during the school year.

Participants who attend regional conferences meet together at the conference site to discuss and report on talks they attended. Also conference presenters are invited to meet with these teachers to better understand problems of teaching pre-college children and to share ideas.

EVALUATION

An evaluation of the four parts of the mechanism requires a carefully structured set of objectives and plans for the measurement of these objectives. Administrators and the participants from their district evaluate the effectiveness of the mechanism.

THE PROTOCOL

INTRODUCTION

A strong up-front administrative commitment is important for successful inservice training. Such commitment is needed to:

- 1) help evaluate change and growth
- 2) foster exchange idea sharing
- 3) permit school visitation
- 4) commit district resources to extend impact
- 5) schedule inservice time for discussions.

Two approaches are used to assure the full and complete flow of information to all stakeholders. The "top-down" approach starts at the state department and other agency director levels and proceeds to meetings with groups of superintendents and principals and then to visits within school districts. The "bottom-up" approach starts with presentations to groups of classroom teachers at conferences and meetings, through newsletters and word-of-mouth. These individuals then request that their schools become involved.

ACCEPTANCE

School systems or individual schools are invited to participate by encouraging teachers to volunteer for training. This step is taken only after a thorough local assessment determines a need and a desire to use the program as a means of meeting the need. The system and mechanism are fully discussed. Teachers' fears and misunderstandings are resolved.

USE

The extent of the implementation of the system and the mechanism of the model is a major step in the protocol. Creating and maintaining the involvement of teachers are accomplished by a team consisting of the principal, curriculum coordinators, peer trainers and the superintendent.

As more teachers become trained in the system there is a need to ensure and maintain high quality training levels. The model includes (1) continual observation and critiquing by expert DLI-trained teachers, (2) developing high quality video tapes for review by trainees, and (3) using district coordinators to catalyze, network, support, and monitor all trainees.

BROADCASTING

Broadcasting is a natural outgrowth of the mechanism. As more teachers are trained and return to their schools to use the system, others learn about it. Colleges are also involved by using the model to provide content instruction and awarding college credit. DLI-trained teachers visit local colleges to explain the system and the model to pre-service teachers.

Administrators also assist in expanding the program within their own schools, and other administrators are encouraged to consider and adopt the program for their teachers.

EVALUATION

The evaluation of the protocol by local implementers of the model assesses the extent to which local protocol objectives are met in a given period, e.g. how many teachers are reached, how committed the community is, and how involved administrators are.